

## Tabitha Hicks



My name is Tabitha Hicks. I would like to share with you the story of where I was for many years and how God used The Agape House to bring me out of addiction. I would like to begin by saying addiction knows no boundaries. I spent many years struggling to obtain sobriety. During the time I was struggling, my children struggled, too. The thing is, I did not realize how much they suffered because of my bad habits. I never considered how obvious it was to my children and what kind of influence I was making in their lives. It never occurred to me that I was introducing my children to drugs and that they may become drug addicts, as well. If I could take it all back, I would in a second, but that will never be an option. Thank God for second chances and for the opportunity to give back!

I was raised in a wonderful home by loving parents who taught me Christian morals. They were strict in discipline, yet they were loving parents who sheltered me from drugs and alcohol. After an uncle molested me at the age of ten and a neighbor again at the age of twelve, I began to rebel. I gave my mother more grief than she could bear. She was unaware that I had been molested until years later, for I was not willing to talk. At that time, I felt dirty, unlovable and ashamed, and I threatened to run away from home. I soon became involved with a man who promised he would always love and protect me. Not knowing what else to do and against her better judgment, my mother allowed me to marry at the age of fifteen. Although this man made a promise to never let anyone hurt me, ironically, he became my abuser. He was an alcoholic and an addict of every drug imaginable. He manufactured and sold methamphetamines. After the birth of our daughter, I decided to try the drugs myself. I felt it would cause him to want me and

it would allow me to be a part of his world. This was the worst mistake I had made yet, for while I was high, reality disappeared. Drugs made me more outgoing and confident in myself. Then came the crash. To every high, there is a low. Reality was back again, and each time I relived my past, which fueled my desire to get high again. This was the beginning of many years of drug addiction.

The life of drug addiction is very dangerous for the addict, as well as for the children. When a parent is using drugs, the children are subjected to a life unsafe for adults let alone children. The parents, many times, are introducing their children to sexual predators and physical abusers without even realizing it. Drugs make people do things they would not originally do. This is a direct indication of how my life was. As a young, single mother, I, like many other women, felt the need for a man in my life. By the time I was twenty-four, I had given birth to a multiple handicapped son and another daughter. I cleaned myself up, got a job at Emerson Electric, and worked several years while maintaining sobriety. I met and married someone who was still actively using drugs, and while I was working nights, he molested my children. In the year of 2000, I learned of the sexual abuse my children had gone through and instantly got my family away from him. In 2001, I lost my mother. During my eight years of sobriety, she was my go to person. She was the one who I went to when I felt I could take no more and might fall off the wagon. After her death, my life began to spiral. I got high and got an attempt to assist to manufacture charge along with child endangerment. During my addiction, I have also had charges of shoplifting and hot-checks.

I have learned to adapt through necessity as my life changed from having a good, normal life to being a sexually abused child and on to becoming a battered and addicted wife and mother. After having been at The Agape House for the second time, I am very proud to say that I

am now a successful college student. Sometimes in life, one has to go through something in order to be able to empathize with others. If a person has not been there, it is difficult to gain anyone's trust. My point is that although I am ashamed of my past, I know it has made me who I am today. It is the reason I have a great desire to help so many others. For the first time in my adult life, I am also active in a church that I call home. I may not have been the mother I should have been, but I am bound and determined to be the mother and grandmother my family now needs me to be. I cannot take back the past, no matter how much I would love to, but I can be a good example to my children and grandchildren. They can look at my life now and know that if I can turn my life around, then they can do it, too. I have to be able to make a difference, not only in their lives but in every other life I can reach.

While at the Agape House in 2012, I learned through working the twelve steps in the Overcomers book how to maintain my sobriety. Because of The Agape House and second chances, I have been sober 3 years. Everyone involved with The Agape House is passionate about reaching women in addiction and helping them understand how the life they live affects their children. They also want to help mothers understand the value of their children, introduce them to new ways of thinking, and show them how wonderful sobriety can be. I know this because through love and compassion they introduced me to a drug-free lifestyle. I now have a wonderful life. I believe sobriety is obtainable to anyone who wants it. In order to keep it, that person must be willing to change everything about his or her life, must keep in contact with his or her support system, and must learn to put others first.